

Ford Denies Plans for Ties With Hanoi

By PHILIP SHABECOFF
Special to The New York Times

ATLANTA, April 23—President Ford, again on the defensive from an attack on his foreign policy by Ronald Reagan, denied today that the United States planned to establish diplomatic relations with North Vietnam.

Mr. Ford, campaigning in Indiana and Georgia, was repeatedly asked about contentions by his rival for the Republican Presidential nomination that the Administration has made overtures to Hanoi aimed in that direction.

The President said that these reports were "totally without foundation."

Talking to a meeting of broadcasters in Indiana this morning, Mr. Ford said that United States interest in talking to Hanoi was primarily directed at obtaining information about Americans missing in action in the Vietnam War. He said that this country was willing to discuss some "humanitarian aid" to Vietnam.

"But I never said we were going to normalize relations or recognize the North Vietnamese," the President said. "We are not committed. As far as I can see, there is no prospect of it, and there is nothing that would convince me otherwise. We are interested and will do, below that level, anything to get our M.I.A.'s back."

Concession on Georgia

Mr. Reagan has been drawing large enthusiastic audiences here in Georgia, and the President's campaign staff concedes that Mr. Ford is running behind the California Governor in this state.

Mr. Ford attracted big enthusiastic crowds in Indiana, including over 25,000 people who lined the streets of Evansville this morning for a sun-drenched parade, and he called the Indiana primary, which will be held May 4, "crucial."

The Georgia primary will also be held on May 4. Mr. Ford did not predict victory here—his

campaign staff has been saying he is running behind Mr. Reagan. But upon his arrival in Atlanta he said, "We have a darned good chance of winning." He said he was an underdog in Texas but has been making headway in that state, which holds its first primary on May 1. He added he could come from behind in Georgia.

Speaking to campaign workers in Atlanta, he praised his former campaign chairman, Howard H. Callaway, as a "great American." Mr. Callaway, who is from Georgia, resigned as chairman of the Ford campaign committee after he was charged with using political influence to win government favors for a ski resort he controls.

Today Mr. Ford said that Mr. Callaway was receiving "unfair treatment" from the Senate committee that is investigating some of the charges and said that the former campaign chief "ought to get a fair shake."

Mr. Ford did not explain what treatment he considered unfair.

Last night Mr. Ford told an interviewer that Mr. Reagan had pulled "out of the blue" the statement that the United States intended to establish relations with Hanoi.

Mr. Ford did not mention the fact, previously made public by the State Department, that on March 29 the United States Embassy in Paris sent a note to the North Vietnamese Embassy in that city proposing low-level talks on any subject either side found of interest. The United States interest in the talks entered on the issue of servicemen missing in action.

Response by Hanoi

The Hanoi Embassy responded that the economic aid promised by the United States in the Paris peace treaty was a precondition for any talks.

The note from the American Embassy to the Hanoi Embassy had been generated by a Congressional delegation, led by Representative G. V. Montgomery, Democrat of Mississippi, that visited Hanoi late last

year. Talking to reporters yesterday, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger said, "We have stated publicly that we are in principle prepared to have talks with Hanoi in which each side would be free to raise any issue that it wishes and, that then the outcome of these talks can determine whether there is a sufficient basis for normalizing relations. As far as we are concerned, the absolute precondition is a complete accounting for the M.I.A.'s."

However, President Ford, responding to Mr. Reagan's attack, did not mention anything about previous Administration talks on normalization with North Vietnam and appeared to rule the prospect out.

Reagan Going on TV

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., April 24 (UPI)—Mr. Reagan, closing out two days of campaigning through Alabama, charged today that the Ford Administration had not been candid with Americans about the nation's defense posture.

The former Governor of California said he would go on nationwide television next week to detail the "dangers of our present national defense situation." He said the broadcast will be carried Wednesday evening by CBS.